



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
San Diego Public Library

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CONTACT: Mark-Elliott Lugo
619-238-6637
mlugo@sandiego.gov

**MID-CENTURY MODERN ARCHITECTURE FOCUS OF PAINTING
EXHIBITION BY NOTED SAN DIEGO-AREA ARTIST MICHAEL WHEELDEN**
Artist Finds Beauty in Vernacular Architecture; Recent Works Highlighted

SAN DIEGO – An exhibition featuring more than a dozen major works by noted San Diego-area artist Michael Wheelden will open Saturday, November 19, 2011 in the gallery of the Pacific Beach/Taylor Branch Library. The exhibition titled “Painted Desert,” runs through February 25, 2012. The public is invited to a reception for the artist on November 19 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. In addition, the artist will discuss his approach to art making in a free talk on Saturday, January 12 at 1 p.m. in the gallery. The reception and talk are free of charge and reservations are not required. The Pacific Beach/Taylor Branch Library, which houses the flagship gallery for the San Diego Public Library’s Visual Arts Program, is located at 4275 Cass Street. Library hours are Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 12:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.; Thursdays and Fridays, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; and Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The branch is closed Sundays and Mondays.

Wheelden is one of the city’s most respected artists and teachers. “Painted Desert” is his first solo exhibition in seven years and it brings a new twist to a subject Wheelden has been exploring for decades: the vernacular residential architecture common to the region’s older neighborhoods. Since his last solo exhibition in 2004, which was also organized by the Visual Arts Program of the San Diego Public Library, Wheelden’s interest in mid-Century modern architecture – particularly that found in the Southern California desert – has emerged front and center. The clean lines and pared-down aesthetic of these structures, combined with the severely tailored and impeccably maintained landscaping (austere arrangements of cacti, succulents, palms, rocks, gravel, and concrete) surrounding them, suggest a strangely artificial, yet enchanting, world of purity and solitude.

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In keeping with this “less is more” perspective, Wheelden’s technical and visual approaches to his subject have evolved in a simpler direction. His formerly vibrant palette is still exciting, but now evokes an arid, tasteful tranquility, and, compared to his earlier paintings, the shaped canvases, three-dimensional elements, and compositions of his most recent works are similarly restrained. Of course, there’s more than meets the eye. Wheelden’s paintings of dwellings have never been solely about formal concerns, but are also intended as reflections of their inhabitants, the human condition, and man’s relationship to community and nature.

NOTE TO EDITORS: High-resolution color digital images of a number of the works in this exhibition and photographs of the artist are available on request from the library curator.

The San Diego Public Library’s Visual Arts Program is a nationally recognized series of exhibitions, lectures, a television program, and other art-related activities. The Wheelden exhibition is the most recent of more than 150 museum-quality contemporary art exhibitions that have been organized by the Visual Arts Program of the San Diego Public Library since 1997. The mission of the Program is to demonstrate the Library’s role as a cultural institution embracing a broad range of disciplines, while assisting San Diego’s mid-career and older professional artists in achieving wider local, regional, and national attention. Visual Arts Program exhibitions are made possible, in part, by contributions from individuals, volunteer efforts, and the Friends of Central Library. For more information about the Visual Arts Program, the public can contact the library curator at (619) 238-6627 or visit the Library’s website at www.sandiegolibrary.org

Learn about other events at the San Diego Public Library’s Central Library and 35 branches, find links to numerous additional resources, or search for materials in the Library’s catalog online at www.sandiegolibrary.org

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